



## COOKING FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



**The holidays are filled with great food, family and friends. The following are tips to ensure that the food you prepare is safe.**

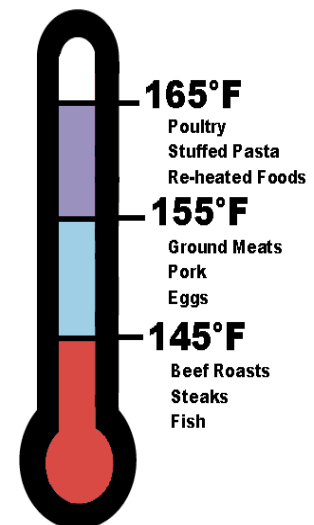
- When grocery shopping, bring along a cooler to transport “cold foods” if the groceries will be in the car for an extended period of time.
- Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before and after handling food.
- Thoroughly wash all equipment that has been used to prepare raw foods.
- To avoid contaminating prepared or ready to eat foods, store raw meats separate from or below other foods.
- Refrain from serving and eating foods that contain partially cooked or raw eggs (i.e. eggnog, mousse, etc.) unless they are made with a pasteurized egg product.
- Foods should be cooled from 135°F to 70°F or less within 2 hours and to 41°F or less within an additional 4 hours. Foods in shallow containers and smaller portions will cool more quickly.
- After foods have been cooked to the appropriate minimum temperature (see thermometer on right), keep cooked foods hot (135°F or above), and cold foods cold (41°F or below)!
- It is important to serve leftovers either very cold (directly from the refrigerator) or very hot (at least 165°F).
- Use a metal stemmed thermometer to make sure the center of the food reaches the proper internal temperature.



## USING YOUR THERMOMETER

A metal stemmed thermometer should be used for all food (not just meats). Metal stemmed thermometers have a metal probe, a dial face and are numerically scaled. They will read temperatures from 0 – 220°F, and can be purchased at grocery, hardware and department stores.

Insert the thermometer into the center of the thickest part (away from the bone) of the meat. When cooking casseroles and egg dishes, place the thermometer into the thickest portion, making sure the thermometer does not touch the bottom of the pan.



**MCDH**

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